

Office of Human Resources

Personnel Newsletter

September 2000

PAY RAISE UPDATE

Federal Pay Raise Pushes Ahead:

The Senate is on schedule to join the House in endorsing a 3.7-percent raise for general schedule employees in January 2001. The Senate Appropriations Committee has included funds to provide a raise of that amount in its version (S-2900) of the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2001. Also, like the House-passed version (HR-4871), the Senate's measure includes language to cancel the higher contributions toward retirement that Federal and postal employees currently are paying because of a previous budget bill (0.4 percent of salary more currently, with another 0.1 percent increase slated for January 2001 under current law). Although budget leaders tried maneuvers to get the bill to passage before Congress went on its August recess, the legislation still awaits a full Senate vote.

Pay Caps Set to Rise 2.7 Percent:

The pay caps that affect Federal employees at the upper reaches of several pay systems would rise 2.7 percent under the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bills crafted by both the House and Senate. The caps would increase by that amount because Congress would accept a raise of 2.7 percent in January 2001; the raise is automatic unless specifically rejected, and any move to reject it normally would come as part of the Treasury-Postal Bill. The House defeated a challenge to the raise on a 250-173 vote, virtually assuring that Congress will accept the increase, which would be its third in 4 years.

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CARRYOVER OF EXCESS ANNUAL LEAVE

Unused earned annual leave may be carried over from one leave year to the next. However, the amount is limited by Federal law to 30 days (240 hours). Under certain conditions, excess leave may be carried over. There are certain regulatory requirements that must be satisfied before an agency may consider approval of excess leave carryover.

1. An SF-71, Application for Leave, must be on file with the employee's timekeeper, before the start of the third pay period prior to the end of the leave year (by December 2, 2000) documenting that the leave was scheduled and approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.
2. The Deputy Director for Operations is authorized to declare an exigency of business exists and thereby cancel the scheduled leave.

In such cases, the immediate supervisor must prepare a memorandum addressed to the Deputy Director for Operations requesting cancellation of the leave due to an **exigency of business**, noting that no other employee can carry out the work; a description of the effects of postponement of the work; specifying the number of hours of annual leave involved in the request; and the beginning and ending dates of the exigency. The original SF-71, which recorded the scheduling of the leave, must be attached. After the beginning of the next leave year, an employee may request restoration of lost leave due to the approved exigency. Such requests must be submitted to OHR for approval by the Personnel Officer. The approved exigency and SF-71 must be submitted with the restoration request.

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Carryover of excess leave may also be approved in the event an employee's injury or illness prevented the taking of annual leave before the leave year's end. In such cases, the official authorized to approve excess leave carryover is the Personnel Officer. An immediate supervisor requesting excess leave carryover due to injury/illness must request approval of carryover with a memorandum to the Personnel Officer with the original signed, approved SF-71 attached.

In October, the Office of Human Resources will issue an alert memo to the Center staff providing detailed instructions on the specific procedures to be followed.

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Top-Level Salaries Linked:

A raise for Congress translates into a raise for Federal judges, as well as political appointees in the executive branch. The executive schedule salary system for those appointees in turn is used to set the pay caps affecting the Senior Executive Service and several other high-level careerist pay systems. While different caps apply for different purposes, the most significant figure for most of those potentially affected is the overall pay cap. That would rise after a 2.7-percent increase to \$133,700, after rounding, from its current \$130,200. Employees in the top three levels of the SES, some in the next level down, and many employees in the Senior Level and several other top career pay systems are up against the pay caps.

UPDATING YOUR EDUCATIONAL LEVEL



When you first enter on duty, your educational level is entered into the personnel data base. If, during your career, you take college-level classes or obtain an undergraduate or advanced degree, it is important to remember to update your personnel record. Contact the personnel assistant that supports your organization in the Operations Centers, to ensure that your record reflects your current educational level.

ANNUAL LEAVE USE OR LOSE

The time of year has arrived when employees should review their annual leave balances, keeping in mind the 30-day limit (240 hours) on the annual leave carryover balance. If it appears that you will have an excess of annual leave, the following information will be important to you.

EMPLOYEES:

Plan your leave for the balance of the leave year, which ends January 13, 2001. Follow up with your supervisor if you do not receive timely feedback on your leave request. When annual leave is denied, or approved leave is canceled, an alternate period of time should be scheduled. This should be done without delay.

Special attention must be given to schedule leave to avoid forfeiture of annual leave that is in excess of the maximum carryover allowed at the end of the leave year. Use an SF-71, Application for Leave, to request "use or lose" annual leave and submit a new leave request to update your leave schedule if your supervisor cancels "use or lose" leave you have previously submitted.

If you do not request leave, or do not use leave that was approved, any resulting forfeiture will be considered to be by your choice.

The U.S. Comptroller General decisions state that Federal employees who do not schedule leave in advance and in writing, and who forfeit the leave due to exigencies of public business may not have that leave restored. The Comptroller General has also stated that informal notification or verbal requests are not sufficient, even when extenuating circumstances exist.

SUPERVISORS:

Supervisors are expected to assist employees in planning and scheduling the use of annual leave on a year-round basis to provide for reasonable vacation periods and to ensure the use of leave that employees might otherwise forfeit.

Take prompt action on leave requests. Ask the employee to resubmit a leave request for another period if you have had to deny a request. Take timely action to approve rescheduled "use or lose" leave. SF-71's that include "use or lose" leave must be dated/approved no later than December 2, 2000.

Request an approval of an "Exigency of the Public Business" if you see no alternative to cancellation of employees' leave, which could result in a loss of leave. An "exigency" proposal must be approved by the Deputy Director for Operations before you cancel "use or lose" leave that cannot be rescheduled before the end of the leave year.



Have You Been Deferred . . .

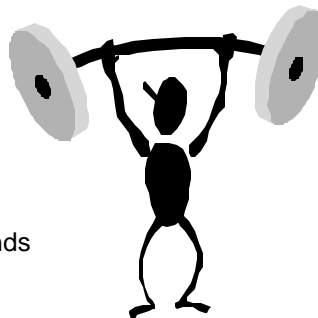
Have you tried to donate blood but were deferred because of an iron deficiency?

There are several reasons for iron deficiencies including dieting, consuming fewer calories, and/or not eating a balanced diet. If you are a tea drinker, tannic acid in tea of any type, hot or cold, interferes with iron absorption. Also, taking certain medications like aspirin and some prescriptions can cause irritation to the lining of the stomach if taken regularly. Antacids, taken for stomach irritation, also interfere with the absorption of iron.

Do not be discouraged if you have been deferred from donating blood because of an iron deficiency. There are two kinds of iron found in foods: 1) *heme-iron*, found in meats, soybeans, and molasses; and 2) *non-heme iron*, found in green leafy vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, beans, and eggs. Non-heme iron is not as readily absorbed, but can be enhanced by consuming sources of vitamin C along with the non-heme iron.

Here are some food sources to help boost your iron levels:

- Beef - liver, calf liver, ground
- Soybeans
- Blackstrap molasses
- Cream of Wheat
- Cooked green leafy vegetables
- Nuts – brazil, pistachio, peanuts, cashews, almonds
- Raisins
- Chocolate

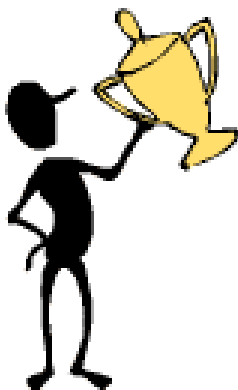


The next Bloodmobile is scheduled to be here at NASA Glenn October 12-13, 2000. To help prevent deferment, cut out teas and increase your intake of the above items the week before the Bloodmobile. For more information on donating blood, visit the American Red Cross Web site <http://www.arc-cleveland.org/>.

NASA EXTERNAL AWARDS

Every quarter, the Center receives requests for nominations for a wide variety of non-NASA awards. A call letter with nomination criteria summaries is sent to the directorate offices for distribution. Please call the Awards Office at extension 3-2848, for a copy of a nomination form, or for specific information.

The following is a list of non-NASA External Awards solicitation due this quarter, October to December 2000:



Federal Engineer of the Year Award
AIAA Awards
Federal Executive of the Year Award
Achievement in Managing Information Technology
Frank G. Brewer Trophy
National Public Service Awards
Cliff Henderson Award for Achievement
Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy
Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Federal Environmental Engineer of the Year Award
National Medal of Technology
Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award
Stellar Awards
Society of Women Engineers Awards
Alan T. Waterman Award
Engineers' Council Awards